

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Reply in response to the non-final Office Action mailed June 14, 2007, the period for response being extended through October 14, 2007, with the concurrent filing of a petition for one-month extension of time and payment of the requisite fee. Applicants respectfully traverse all pending rejections and request reconsideration of the application, as amended.

Before this Reply, claims 24-46 were pending, of which claims 24, 38, and 42 were independent. In response to a Restriction Requirement dated February 21, 2007, Applicants provisionally elected without traverse to prosecute claims 24-41. See Response to Restriction Requirement dated March 15, 2007. Accordingly, in this response Applicants have canceled the non-elected claims 42-46 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants have also amended claims 24, 29, 30, and 38 and canceled dependent claims 27 and 28 without prejudice or disclaimer. As a result of these amendments, claims 24-26 and 29-41 are currently pending, of which claims 24 and 38 are independent.

In the non-final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 24-27, 33, and 37 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0028040 ("Tseng") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0031413 ("Kimerling"). In addition, the Examiner objected to claims 28-32, 34-36, and 38-41 as being dependent on rejected base claims, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In this response, Applicants have amended independent claims 24 and 38 to incorporate the subject matter recited in allowable claim 28 and its intervening

dependent claim 27 (both of which have been canceled by this response). Because previously-pending dependent claim 28 was identified as containing allowable subject matter (see Office Action at ¶ 6), Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 24 and 38, as presently amended, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Dependent claims 25, 26, 29-37, and 39-41 depend on allowable independent claims 24 and 38 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons.

Conclusion

The preceding remarks are based only on the arguments in the Office Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Office Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding remarks in favor of patentability are advanced without prejudice to other possible bases of patentability.

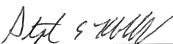
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application, as amended, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: September 28, 2007

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